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## REFLECTIONS ON PROFESSOR PATTEN'S VIEWS.

I agree that the difficulties of language in a changing world of discourse are great, but I do not see that with all his good will, Professor Patten succeeds in avoiding the use of such terms as *ultimate*, *permanence*, *reality*, *original*, and *primary*, and I doubt if he can. The distinctions which they, or their equivalents, stand for have become almost a part of the structure of human thought. The mistake is only in taking them in any absolute sense. Some things are *more* ultimate or permanent or real or original or primary than other things—that is perhaps all we can say. A final ultimate, an absolutely-permanent, an unconditionally real, an original that has no manner of derivation, a primary that is not itself in some sense a secondary, may be a *Gedankending* entirely and no reality—though, on the other hand, I do not think we can say positively that it is, the exhaustion of the possibilities of being not being an easy attainment. But as I used the terms in my previous paper, I did not take them in a more than relative sense. Once after saying “fundamental” I added as an equivalent “more fundamental,” and this was my implicit meaning all along the line. And in this relative sense I find Professor Patten himself using the terms in the present article, which I am glad to have been in any measure the means of provoking. He speaks, for instance, of the “return of the original in some more complex form,” of structure as the “enduring element of a circuit,” of “elements” of the universe in which there is no such thing as structure (surely akin then to “primary” forms of reality); he even refers to the “reality behind all” (as slowly altering), and of “the Growing, the Becoming” as “the Ultimate.” I hardly think we differ in the principles of our use of language, however we may vary in their concrete and detailed application.

The most general conception which Professor Patten now offers is that of the order of existence as serial and even circular. The antecedents and consequents in a series are equally real (though some may be or become recessive)—the antecedent is no more original or ultimate than the consequent. The material (or physical) and the psychical are on the same plane, or if the material comes first and the psychical later, this does not mean that the material is more primordial in the world, but simply that it happens to appear first. When a blood illumination (I am not just

clear as to what this means, but no matter for the purpose in hand) occurs, and consciousness follows, that is not that the former causes the latter, but that there is a change, and these are the two terms of the change, the consciousness being quite as ultimate as the illumination of the blood, i. e., neither being really ultimate, language of this sort being, when strictly taken, irrelevant. The trouble is that we substantize what are only phases of a process, and after we have thus separated them we cannot easily get them together—hence a problem. As Professor Patten puts it, changes in the world are changes of form, not of substance. (Does not this imply, I may ask in passing, that the physical and psychical are of *one* substance? Or, in this view, is substance an irrelevant conception—a *misconception* like that of the two substances or entities which Professor Patten repudiates?)

But this is only a part and not the most characteristic part of Professor Patten's conception. The order of existence is circular as well as serial. Professor Patten's illustration of an economic circuit—starting with the material, passing through the psychical, and returning to the material again, is very interesting, biographically and theoretically. The antecedent of thought here is food, but it is just as true that (more) food is the consequent of thought. The process does not run on indefinitely on one line, but returns on itself, and what is gained by the circuit becomes (or may become) the starting-point for a new circuit. Possibilities for indefinite progress in the course of the world's history seem thus to be opened—each circular series of changes enriching the world with a new result.

It is in the light of this general view that I must now regard the questions of my previous article. I understand Professor Patten a little better; do I find myself therefore satisfied? My prime question was as to the interpretation of energy, or pulses of energy. I thought I detected in Professor Patten's language the view, or suggestion of a view, that the inner meaning of a pulse of energy was a wish—or at least something of a psychical nature (in most cases when I speak of "wish" hereafter, I take the liberty, to avoid many words, of using the term in this representative sense as standing for the elemental, or more elemental, psychical forces in general). As I understand him now, the physical and psychical are not contemporaneous, one being manifestation, the other the reality manifested, but terms in a series, the physical coming first and the

psychical afterward or the psychical first and the physical afterward, according to the stage of the process which is had in mind. The physical (visible structure, for example) may be second in relation to wish, but the wish itself is second in relation to a pulse of energy—at least wish becomes *will* only as wish has created a structure which is the indispensable prerequisite of will. This is an intelligible view, and Professor Patten appears not to shrink from its uttermost consequences. Speaking of the universe at large, the “vital” elements, “energy and wish” (notice “vital,” signifying I presume, that they are sources of change, in contrast with structure which tends to be stable—also “and”, implying apparently that energy and wish are *two*, not one), are viewed as ever playing their part, giving birth to structure, the structure giving birth in turn to new and higher manifestations of themselves, and their earlier form being itself in turn conditioned by structure of a more rudimentary nature. “Each specific structure had a wish as its antecedent, but this specific wish also had a structure antecedent to it. . . . and so on *ad infinitum* without beginning or end”.<sup>1</sup> That is, wish and energy, wish and structure too, are equally primordial (so far as the word is allowable) in the world, the difference being simply in the time of their manifestation and the degree of their complication. We have here the difficulty of an infinitely attenuated wish and an infinitesimal structure at one end (if there be an end) and of an infinitely organized wish and an infinitely complex structure at the other end (if there be another end), but the difficulty is one perhaps involved in all conceptions of an infinite series and need not detain us here.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Patten’s ventures into the theological realm in this connection I will refer to only in passing. I am not particularly

<sup>1</sup> Professor Patten says, “It cannot be said that all wishes preceded structure nor that structure as a whole preceded wishes, but it can be said that before such structure was a wish and after it a new wish demanding new structure”—and no doubt he would equally say, “*Before* each wish was a structure and *before* that structure another wish and so on.”

<sup>2</sup> I may remark here for the curious that another conception of the circular nature of reality was advanced by Nietzsche. The possibilities of progressive evolution are limited in his view, owing to the finite nature of the constituent forces of the world, and when the maximum point has been reached, disintegration sets in, chaos (lack of structure) returns, and in time a process of evolution begins over again. The course of existence is thus literally circular, while with all the circularity in Professor Patten’s conception the course of existence *im grossen und ganzen* moves on in a straight line, and there is never an actual return to an earlier starting-point. In accordance with his view, Professor Patten thinks that all natural processes are synthetic, nature tending ever toward more complex forms (except where its forces are artificially isolated); but is this true? Is not disintegration or devolution and return to relative chaos as natural as movement toward higher organization?

interested—at least at present—in a “First Cause” and I am not sure that, if I were, I could find a substitute in “the Great Wish” or “Super-will.” For the time being I tend rather to a pluralistic conception of the forces of the world. However, I agree that for me at least “the higher concept [because the only practically attainable one] of God is not that he is perfect, absolutely independent, and unknowable. He is due to a long series of circular processes just as our material world is.” It is essentially the Nietzschean conception of the Divine (equivalent to Superhuman, Superman), which is a result of evolution, not its beginning. Nietzsche would also agree with Professor Patten when he speaks of “the Growing, the Becoming” as “the Ultimate” (only he would add to “the Growing,” “the Diminishing, the Perishing”); in one passage he characterizes his view as an “inverted Platonism,” saying that the further we get from “real Being” the better (i. e., theoretically, not necessarily practically).<sup>3</sup>

When, however, Professor Patten proceeds at this point to speak of what he suspects to be the real difference between his position and mine (“if there be one,” as he courteously adds), he comes to the rub of the difficulty, i. e., my difficulty. “He seems to imply,” says Professor Patten referring to me, “that the foreground—that of which we are directly conscious—is less than the content of the background; the latter being permanence, reality, and cause. To me the foreground and the background are on an equality.” Now just what do I think? To explain fully would be going beyond the righteous limits of the present discussion, i. e., of my part in it; I am principally a learner here, desirous of getting another’s point of view and only incidentally advancing a tentative view of my own. But I will say what I can say in a few words, saying it rather dogmatically perhaps, as Dr. Carus used sometimes to describe statements of his views, meaning only that he omitted the underlying reasons and also necessary qualifications. Professor Patten speaks of the “physical” as “unseen in consciousness.” That is just the reverse of my way of thinking. By “physical” qualities I suppose we all mean—at least I mean—such things as heat and cold, sounds, sweet and sour, odor, color, resistance, hardness, pressure, weight, size, and the like; sometimes they are grouped in secondary and primary classes—but they are all alike physical. Now as I conceive matters, they are every one of them open to consciousness, directly experienced by consciousness; there is nothing occult or

<sup>3</sup> *Werke*, IX, 190; X, 160.

hidden about them. They are immediately felt—in fact, to separate them from feeling and make them into a world apart is a most problematical thing, if indeed it can have the dignity of being problematic at all. They are a part of experience, and independently of experience really mean nothing, are an *Unding*. Does a pain mean anything if it is not felt? As little does heat or weight mean anything if it is not felt. This is not saying that there is not something connected with the experiences that may not exist apart. We do not arbitrarily create them and cannot arbitrarily change them; somehow they are forced upon us and in just the specific shape they take. In given circumstances, I must experience red, must feel weight (I am now leaving abnormal conditions or dream phenomena out of account). But what is properly physical is feeling, somebody's (or something's) experience, all the same; separable from experience it is nothing. ("Consciousness," in the sense in which it has become something debatable in recent times—or may be even held to be non-existent—may not be necessary to the physical, but the germ, or germs, out of which consciousness—if it exists—develops, namely, feeling, is. Consciousness, in the proper and perhaps only legitimate sense, is attention, and this is a secondary thing in psychical life.)

And yet when I reflect at all about the matter, I see that colors, sounds, odors, resistances, weights, etc., are evanescent phenomena—they are feelings, experiences, coming and going; there is no steady, constant red and no steady, constant weight—indeed, such experiences would be intolerable, and inconsistent with the practical necessities of life. The world that stretches out beyond [and includes] our bodies is a world of our imagination or thought rather than one of actual immediate experience—we picture and spread out a panorama of what we *have* experienced or other people have experienced, or of what we think we or others *might* experience. We customarily think of this largely possible world as an actually existent and relatively constant thing; but it is in good measure neither actual nor constant, if experience is an inseparable part of it, for experience, as we humans have it at least, is momentary and fragmentary. We are thus driven, or at least led, to go out beyond the circle of our feelings if we want something that is anywise abiding. Yes, and a deeper impulse still seems to be at work. For with such minds as have at last come to us in the course of evolution, we incline to look for an explanation of anything that

suddenly arises and then passes away; we think it must come from somewhere, must have some ground or reason for being (however momentary may be the being, and all the more indeed just because it is momentary)—that is, we look for the agents or factors that produce it, and produce it in just the particular definite shape and outline that it has. If we could produce heat and cold, sound and color, resistance and weight at will, all would be different—it might be a world, but it would not be our present world, in which arbitrary will or thought or fancy or imagination do nothing—they cannot of themselves give birth to a single sensation. Hence, if *we* do not do the work, somebody or something else must—supposing that there is any sense in reasoning at all. We are led then, I say, to conceive of agents beyond ourselves in order to account for what happens to us, i. e., our experiences,—agents or factors that condition them, explain them, cause them, or are responsible for them, whatever the form of speech we may prefer. In short, we must go out of the world of experience to account for the fact that we have experience—or at least this very particular and definite kind of experience of which I am now speaking; something or somethings, we reason, lie behind it or beyond it or above it or below it—whichever preposition we choose.

Now this point of view I judge that Professor Patten does not share, and here I think is the primary ground for our difference, as far as it exists. To me the foreground of thought and its background (these words interpreted as above) are not on an equality. I believe—perhaps I cannot say more than “believe”—that what gives me feelings of sweet or heat or sound or weight is or may be more permanent than sweet or heat or sound or weight itself, that it may be very little if at all affected by the fact that it works these changes in me, that it is to this extent an independently real and would exist just the same whether I were on hand to be affected by it or not. The physical is thus most decidedly a secondary phenomenon or fact in the world. It is known directly, but it is not self-sufficient, or stable, or anything but a revelation (perhaps ultimately for practical purposes) of forces or agents behind it. These forces or agents may not be indeed themselves stable or self-sufficient, they may be conditioned or determined by something beyond them, but they are at least more stable and self-sufficient than the passing experiences they give rise to in us; for example, what gives me the sense of weight to-day may have given me the

same sensation ten years ago, and might have any day in between; in other words, it was there, and relatively unchanging, though I had no experience from it whatever in the intervening time and though conceivably no one else had experienced it during that time either; in short, it is in common parlance, a more permanent thing, a more real thing, more nearly an ultimate thing than the momentary accidental effects it has had on me.

A query then arises as to how we are to think of these metem-  
pirical (meta-physical, super- or sub-sensible—they are all equivalent expressions) forces or agents. Now it was because I thought I found the suggestion of an answer that I was so interested in Professor Patten's first article. He spoke of pulses of energy rising, e. g., on the surface of an ameba, and sinking back and reappearing at some other point of the surface. These are, as I should say, *physical* phenomena, my (or somebody's) observation, or experience, resolvable at last into shades of color, with their varying outlines, degrees of resistance, with their varying extent or size, and so on. But the interesting thing was that Professor Patten seemed to give a certain *interpretation* of them. He spoke of them as "a wish striving for fulfilment," although "objectively considered" they were "a series of surface projections created by a passing pulse of energy." He characterized them formally as "*on their physical side surplus discharges*" (italics mine). That is, there was by implication another side, and an interior view of the physical phenomena was suggested. The view seemed hardly to be held to quite consistently, but it was there, and I strove to see if by interpretation consistency could be made out—hence my little paper. But now I see that Professor Patten did not quite mean what I thought or hoped he did. Wishes or will and energy or structure are not, in his view, inside and outside of the same reality, absolutely coexistent and contemporaneous (supposing an observer is on hand), but *successive* things, now one, now the other in evidence, all quite on a par so far as their existential quality is concerned, no one being more primitive and primordial than another. The view is still extremely interesting, and far and away ahead of the ordinary materialistic view, according to which the psychical is the outcome or product of the physical; still it does not satisfy me—at bottom, I suppose, because I hold to what I hope I shall not confuse the reader by calling an *idealistic* interpretation of the physical, while he holds to the realistic or common-



sense view (ultimately, I should add, I am just as realistic as he).<sup>4</sup> All the same, I am profoundly indebted to him for his vigorous and keen vindication of the shaping influence which the psychical may have on the physical, though I might state the influence in terms which he would not approve (see the close of my previous article).

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I may add two or three minor comments, though I fear I have already exceeded the limits of space allowable to me. Professor Patten says that though the growth of structure is the growth of the universe, "yet in its elements there is no such thing as structure. All is flow, transformation, substitution—a fickle mass made coherent by something that comes from it but is not of it." But do not wishes belong to those elements, and are not wishes ever creating structure or tending to? Indeed, must not structure in some infinitesimal form at least always belong to the universe, if wishes are at work?

The developments of Professor Patten's distinction between wish and will now made by him interest me, and I recognize their validity within limits, though I might use different language—I will not undertake to discuss them now. However, in answer to his express question, "Would he rather be permanent than influential?" I will say that I certainly hope that I should be great enough to prefer survival in the form of an impersonal influence (supposing there was something of worth in me) than in the form of my present most finite self—or, to use Professor Patten's phraseology, I should rather be "influential" than "permanent." Is there not a suggestion of a similar idea in the saying attributed to Jesus, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," and still more distinctly in such language as "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter [elsewhere described as leading into all truth] will not come to you" (John xii. 24; xvi. 7).

Nothing could be happier than what is said of tropic and instinctive action. I think there is no gainsaying the fact that in instinctive actions the tropic tendencies are still there; but would Professor Patten say that in the antecedent purely tropic movements, the instinctive tendencies were there? Perhaps not—surely they

<sup>4</sup> If idealism is, as it is sometimes regarded, the doctrine that "the act of knowing constitutes, creates, or modifies the things known, with the result that the entire world, in so far as it is knowable, is indissolubly bound up with the reality of a mind, or minds," then I completely dissent from it.

are not discoverable—but if they are not in any sense there, how do they ever come to be, and, when they come, are they not an outright creation? If, on the other hand, we say that tropism itself is essentially (interiorly) psychic, the difficulty vanishes—or at least diminishes. In other words, does the “complex unit,” of whose evolution Professor Patten speaks, *become* complex, or is it in germ and possibility complex from the start, the possibility passing from a state of *δύναμις* to one of *ἐνέργεια*? More briefly still, are there ever tropisms “determined solely by objective conditions” (as Professor Patten supposes), save as one psychic tendency may be more determining, stronger, than another? Professor Patten once speaks of factors in a synthetic process, which are “active, even if incapable of observation”—may not this language have a wide application? May not factors, indeed, be *inactive* and yet truly exist, or, to speak more correctly, may there not be elements in, or bound up with, a synthetic process which have to wait for time and occasion to become *factors* at all?

Professor Patten says that wish is not the *cause* of structure, but merely the antecedent. None the less, he uses the words “influence,” “modify,” “action,” “mould.” If he had said “does not *create*” (in the old sense), *originate*, I could understand. He even goes so far as to speak of wishes in this connection as “indexes” (of the pressure exerted by underlying, as yet non-structural forces) rather than anything else, but if they do not effect something, what is the occasion for them, what is their use, why in the economy of nature may they not be spared? And, after all, does cause *mean* anything more than that which effects?

Professor Patten still continues to use language at times, noticeably at the close of his present article, which suggests the view that the physical is the more primary or original thing, the wish being simply a reflection or index or representation of it—not quite epiphenomenal, indeed, for it can in turn effect something in the physical realm, but still secondary. According to my view, or at least the view I am now interested in suggesting, it is always primary (i. e., *more* primary than the physical). A wish need not be conscious, i. e., attended to by anybody, may be a mere tendency or impulse, representable physically as a blind movement, and yet be real, indeed the substance of what appears as movement to us.

WILLIAM M. SALTER.

WASHINGTON, D. C.